

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FLUOROCARBONS AND PCBS IN THE OECD

REF: (A) OECD PARIS 4594 (FLUOROCARBONS), (B) OECD PARIS
4770 (PCBS), (C) OECD DOCUMENT ENV(76)8 - CHEMICAL
GROUP'S PROPOSAL ON FLUOROCARBONS TO OECD PROGRAM

SUMMARY: ANALYSIS BY USG OF MOST SIGNIFICANT AND URGENT
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GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO

UNIQUE ROLE OECD IS ABLE TO PLAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD SUGGESTS THAT SUBJECT OF REGULATION OF INDUSTRIALLY-DERIVED CHEMICAL POLLUTANTS DESERVES HIGHEST PRIORITY WITHIN OECD WORK PROGRAM. SPECIFICALLY, THE US PREPARED TO RECOMMEND AT MARCH 15-19 MEETING OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE THAT STRONG, URGENT FOCUS BE PLACED ON PCBS AND FLUOROCARBONS AND THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO A COHERENT, LONG-TERM EFFORT WHICH MIGHT EXPAND OR EVOLVE IN THE FUTURE INTO THE ADDRESSING OF OTHER TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS (E.G., AGRICULTURAL FERTILIZERS). IN ADDITION, US WILL SEEK TO ENSURE COMMITMENT THAT ADEQUATE RESOURCES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE OECD TO CARRY OUT A SUCCESSFUL AND MEANINGFUL PROGRAM IN THIS AREA. ADDRESSEES ARE ASKED TO SEEK SUPPORT FOR THE US POSITION. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ARE US VIEWS OF APPROPRIATE OECD EFFORTS ON FLUOROCARBONS. A SEPARATE MESSAGE WILL FOLLOW ON PCBS.

2. ON FEB. 17, A MEETING OF FEDERAL INTERAGENCY SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATOSPHERIC POLLUTION (OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS) REAFFIRMED THE POTENTIAL SERIOUSNESS OF THE FLUOROCARBON-OZONE DEPLETION PROBLEM, AND THE NEED FOR EARLY INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATION OF POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES. US AGENCY REPS FURTHER AGREED THAT THE OECD OFFERS ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR ADDRESSING ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM WHICH CONCERN FLUOROCARBON PRODUCTION, USE, SUBSTITUTION AND (PARTICULARLY) REGULATORY OPTIONS AND THEIR ECONOMIC IMPACTS. OECD ACTION IN THIS AREA WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE FOLLOW-UP TO USEFUL ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND WORK IT HAS ALREADY CARRIED OUT.

3. SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING REVIEWED IN DETAIL PROPOSED OECD WORK PROGRAM ON FLUOROCARBONS AS PRESENTED IN DOCUMENT ENV(76)8, AND AGREED ON FOLLOWING PRIORITY TASKS WHICH WILL BE BASIS OF US POSITION AT MARCH 15-19 MEETING. IN GENERAL, WE BELIEVE THAT ITEMS 4(D) AND 4(C) DESERVE HIGHEST PRIORITY; 4(A) AN INTERMEDIATE PRIORITY; AND UNCLASSIFIED

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4(B) THE LOWEST PRIORITY. WHILE IN SOME RESPECTS THESE ITEMS ARE NOT SEPARABLE, WE BELIEVE THEY LEND THEMSELVES TO SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN IMPLEMENTATION. SPECIFICALLY, THE QUESTION OF SUBSTITUTIONS FOR FLUOROCARBONS (4(C)) AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING, PLANNED, OR POSSIBLE REGULATORY MEASURES (4(D)(I)) ENTAIL IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION, WHICH COULD LOGICALLY BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF

MEMBER COUNTRIES, WITH SECRETARIAT EFFORTS RESTRICTED TO INITIAL FORMULATION OF INFORMATION NEEDS (E.G., A QUESTIONNAIRE) AND SUBSEQUENT COMPILATION AND ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY RESPONSES. CONTINUING MEMBER COUNTRY EFFORTS TO UPDATE AND/OR COMPLETE PRODUCTION AND USE DATA (4(A)) ALSO FALLS UNDER THIS GENERAL RUBRIC. IT IS URGED THAT AT LEAST A PRELIMINARY REPORT RESPONSIVE TO POINT 4(D)(I) BE AVAILABLE BY AUGUST 1976 AND THAT THE REMAINDER OF THIS TASK BE COMPLETED BY JANUARY 1, 1977.

4. THIS INFORMATION COULD BE FED INTO THE PROJECT WHICH WE SEE AS THE SECOND, AND MAJOR TASK, AND ON WHICH THE US PLACES PARTICULARLY HIGH PRIORITY: THE STUDY OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR REGULATING FLUOROCARBON PRODUCTION AND USE, AND ASSOCIATED ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS. THIS IS ESSENTIALLY ITEM 4(D)(II) OF

ENV(76)8. IN ORDER TO PRODUCE A TIMELY AND USEFUL STUDY, AS WELL AS ONE WHICH WILL COMMAND ATTENTION AND RESPECT, THE OECD SECRETARIAT MUST BE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE A SERIOUS, SOLID ANALYTICAL EFFORT. WHILE THE HARD INFORMATION DEVELOPED ON SUBSTITUTION POSSIBILITIES, AND REGULATORY MEASURES AVAILABLE IN COUNTRIES WILL BE IMPORTANT INPUTS INTO THIS PROJECT, ENOUGH GENERIC INFORMATION EXISTS TO PERMIT THE STUDY TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. GIVEN THE CURRENT PACE OF CONSIDERATION OF REGULATORY MEASURES WITHIN THE US AND SEVERAL OTHER OECD COUNTRIES, MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1977 TO HAVE MAXIMUM UTILITY. BY FOCUSING THE STUDY INITIALLY ON THE POSSIBLE REGULATION OF AEROSOL-DISPERSED FLUOROCARBONS, THE EARLY 1977 DEADLINE WOULD APPEAR TO BE REALISTIC.

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5. ON THE ISSUE OF RESOURCES, THERE CLEARLY WILL HAVE TO BE SOME REALLOCATION IN ORDER TO DO THE TYPE OF JOB WHICH NEEDS TO BE DONE. WHILE SOME OF THE EFFORT WILL FALL TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS (E.G., PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR PARA 4(D)(I)), MOST OF IT WILL BE SECRETARIAT--INCLUDING CONSULTANT--RESPONSIBILITY. TOTAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENT IS NOT CLEAR, BUT, AS NOTED ABOVE, COMMITMENT MUST BE MADE TO AN EXPEDITED, SOLID EFFORT. IN OUR VIEW, ABSOLUTE MINIMUM DURING THE NEXT 12 MONTHS WOULD BE THE ONE FULL-TIME SLOT "BELONGING" TO THE CHEMICALS GROUP (WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS AT PRESENT VACANT) PLUS A SIMULTANEOUS YEAR OF CONSULTANT TIME.

6. THE US ASSIGNS A LOWER PRIORITY TO ITEM 4(B) AND MOST ELEMENTS OF 4(A) OF ENV(76)8 SINCE THEY ARE BEING

ADDRESSED ELSEWHERE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BY ORGANIZATIONS WHICH APPEAR TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED TO CARRY OUT THE TASKS AND WHICH WILL ALSO BENEFIT TO A GREATER DEGREE IN TERMS OF FURTHERING THEIR OVERALL INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND BROADER PROGRAM OF OBJECTIVES.

(THE OECD SHOULD, AT THE SAME TIME, BE KEPT COMPLETELY AU COURANT AS TO THE RESULTS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.) FOR EXAMPLE, THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION HAS UNDER CONSIDERATION THE PREPARATION OF AN INVENTORY OF RESEARCH (ITEM 4(B)) AS PART OF A LARGER SCIENCE-ORIENTED PROGRAM ON STRATOSPHERIC POLLUTION; AND, AT THE MARCH MEETING OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL, A STATUS REPORT WILL BE PRESENTED BY THE UNEP DIRECTOR ON PRIORITY RESEARCH NEEDS AND THE RESULTS OF A UNEP SURVEY OF FLUOROCARBON PRODUCTION, USE AND RESEARCH IN NON-OECD COUNTRIES (ITEM 4(A)).

7. IN VIEW OF THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

INVOLVED, IT WOULD SEEM DESIRABLE THAT A MEETING OF UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, THE OECD AND OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND SELECTED GOVERNMENTS SHOULD BE CONVENED THIS SPRING--PROBABLY BY UNEP. THE OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO REVIEW THE SCIENCE COMPONENT OF THE FLUOROCARBON-OZONE DEPLETION PROBLEM, IDENTIFY ONGOING ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS AND AGREE ON A DIVISION OF LABOR AND

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COORDINATING MECHANISMS FOR TASKS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE COMPILATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS AND COLLECTION OF DATA ON FLUOROCARBON PRODUCTION AND USE.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: WITHOUT DELAYING PENDING RECEIPT OF INSTRUCTIONS ON PCBS, (1) US OECD, PLEASE CONVEY GIST OF FOREGOING ON FLUOROCARBONS TO ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE, AND REPS OF OTHER MEMBERS' PERMANENT MISSIONS. LATTER SHOULD BE SIMULTANEOUSLY ASKED TO SEEK THEIR GOVERNMENTS' SUPPORT FOR US POSITION IN HOPES SUCH SUPPORT CAN BE OFFERED AT MARCH 16-19 MEETING. (2) US EMBASSIES, PLEASE CONVEY GIST OF FOREGOING TO APPROPRIATE HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL (S) ASKING FOR SYMPATHETIC SUPPORT OF US BY THEIR DELS IN UPCOMING OECD SESSION. INGERSOLL

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